

I am pleased to follow my friend from Southern California (Mr. *Dreier*), the chairman of the Committee on Rules, because of one of the areas of concern I have with this bill, and I am hopeful that there will be some amendments made in order, speak specifically to some of the problems of Southern California.

I flew over recently the Alameda Corridor and looked at the problems down there. I have supported it in the past. But the area the gentleman speaks to is currently getting back over a billion dollars a year less from the highway fund than it puts in. There are some serious imbalances currently under our system.

There is a potential that this bill may be hung up at some point over the donor/donee argument, and we will watch as this moves along through the legislative process. But there is a much more fundamental problem in the country in terms of the distribution of transportation money, and that is between our metropolitan area, like my friend from Southern California (Mr. *Dreier*), where there is a vast amount of money that they put in and they get back a much, much smaller portion.

Orlando, Florida, 58 cents on the dollar; Tucson, 57 cents on the dollar; Dallas, Ft. Worth, 75 cents on the dollar: this is an imbalance for the vast majority of metropolitan areas in the country.

There has been an effort to get an amendment made in order by my friend, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. *Eddie Bernice Johnson*), that would require some of the CMAQ funding that is used to solve air quality problems to be spent by the States. And currently some of the States like Texas are withholding this money, not spending it on the area to solve the air quality problem which is actually the source of the money.

I am hopeful before we are through we will be able to have this rule amended, to be able to make that in order, and that we look at this overall imbalance.

I am also deeply concerned about an element that is coming forward from my friend, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. *Kennedy*). Last year he had an amendment that is out that would restrict the ability of toll revenues just to be used for new construction. This is a horrific proposal. There is no reason to restrict State and regional areas on how they spend that money. This would allow them to spend the money to expand the road system, but not use the same money to maintain the road system. Even worse than that, it would not allow San Diego,

Houston, New York, Minneapolis, or other communities which are currently doing valued pricing to continue to do this.

This is a bad idea. It is opposed by most of the State and local authorities who are going to have to live with this bill.

Now, I for one hope that we will be able to continue in the bipartisan spirit from which it came from our committee. We have the broadest coalition supporting our chairman, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. *Young*), assembled in the history of infrastructure that has been considered by this Congress, from the Chamber of Commerce to the environmental groups, from the bicyclists, to the asphalt folks, the Women's Federated Garden Club of America all are on board for this broad-based, bipartisan bill. I sincerely hope we do not have it hijacked by narrow special interests and that we are able to debate it fully, fairly, honestly to make it work best for the American people.

We have been in the infrastructure business for the Federal Government since the founding of the Republic. It is an important national issue. I hope we maintain it.